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### **New Hazardous Materials Squads Cut Response Time**

Today, Public Safety Undersecretaries Kurt Schwartz and Juliette Kayyem, State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan and Southeast Regional Homeland Security Council member Chief Timothy Francis presented two new hazardous material squad trucks to area fire departments that will be housed at the New Bedford and Yarmouth Fire Departments.

In addition, a new statewide response vehicle that becomes part of the state's Hazardous Materials Response Program was also unveiled at the event held at the Bourne Fire Department.

"These new vehicles will provide detection and analysis to local communities and reduce response time to hazardous materials incidents from under one hour to less than thirty minutes," said Undersecretary Schwartz. "Early detection is vital to local incident commanders, healthcare responders, and others responsible for confirming and defining risks or dispelling public concerns about risks," he added.

The hazardous material squads were funded through FY '06 Homeland Security funds through the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security and through the Southeast Homeland Security Council. One additional squad is being deployed in Danvers with funds from the Northeast Homeland Security Council.

"We are strengthening our capability to respond to terrorism as we strengthen our non-terrorism response. No investment, resulting in true improved preparedness is wasted," said Undersecretary for Homeland Security Juliette Kayyem.

"These new squad vehicles are smaller, lighter and faster but have the same detection capabilities as the technical operations modules units currently deployed in each of the six 'hazmat' regions," said Fire Marshal Coan. "The new statewide truck supports the regional hazmat teams with its advanced detection capabilities and video to assess hazardous or 'hot' environments before we put people in harm's way," he added.

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“Fire Departments provide a key response element in rescue operations, particularly when they respond to chemical, biological, radiological and explosive terrorism incidents,” said Fairhaven Fire Chief Timothy Francis, of the Southeast Homeland Security Council. He added, “This hazardous materials squad truck will enhance the fire service response capabilities throughout the region.”

The Regional Hazardous Materials Response Program is an innovative system designed to provide specialized response of personnel and equipment to the 351 communities of the Commonwealth, to enable them to protect the public, the environment, and property during incidents involving a release or potential release of hazardous materials. Six regional response teams are strategically located for a 30-minute response anywhere in the Commonwealth. The regional teams also support local fire departments with technical information and specialized equipment. The Hazardous Materials Response Program is a division of the state Department of Fire Services.